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**FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS DOMINICAN REPUBLIC-BASED ECSTASY
TRAFFICKER OF CONSPIRACIES TO DISTRIBUTE AND IMPORT
MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF ECSTASY PILLS**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special Agent in Charge of the New York Division of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (the "DEA"), announced that a federal jury in Manhattan today convicted DIETER VOGEL of conspiracies to distribute and to import into the United States millions of dollars worth of Ecstasy in 2002 and 2003.

According to the evidence at trial, VOGEL, a German citizen residing in the Dominican Republic, recruited other Europeans living in that country to serve as couriers to take Ecstasy pills from the Netherlands to the United States and Canada. The couriers recruited by VOGEL traveled to the Netherlands where they picked up thousands of Ecstasy pills hidden in false bottoms of suitcases. In an attempt to avoid detection, the couriers were instructed to travel first to their own country before flying to the United States. VOGEL was paid approximately \$10,000 for each courier he recruited. The trial evidence established that VOGEL recruited numerous couriers for Dominican Republic- and Netherlands-based drug organizations that smuggled hundreds of thousands of Ecstasy pills worth millions of dollars into New York, Miami, Washington, and Toronto, Canada. The evidence also proved that VOGEL himself acted as an Ecstasy courier, and that he was arrested at the Philadelphia International Airport in May 2003 with more than 50,000 Ecstasy pills.

VOGEL's case was part of Operation Ex-Nemetz, an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("OCDEF") investigation that resulted in the arrest of more than 30 Ecstasy couriers in the United States, Canada, and Europe and the seizure of more than half a million Ecstasy pills worldwide.

VOGEL's convictions carry a combined maximum sentence of 40 years' imprisonment. VOGEL is scheduled to be sentenced by United States District Judge VICTOR MARRERO, on September 8, 2006.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the DEA, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, New York Police Department, New York State Police, and OCDETF and thanked the United States Customs and Border Protection Service and law enforcement officials in the Dominican Republic and the Netherlands for their assistance in the investigation, arrest and prosecution of this important target.

The VOGEL prosecution is being handled by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys KEVIN R. PUVALOWSKI and PABLO QUIÑONES are in charge of the prosecution.

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